SONS OF THE NORTH

A History of the St. John Family of Uchelolau

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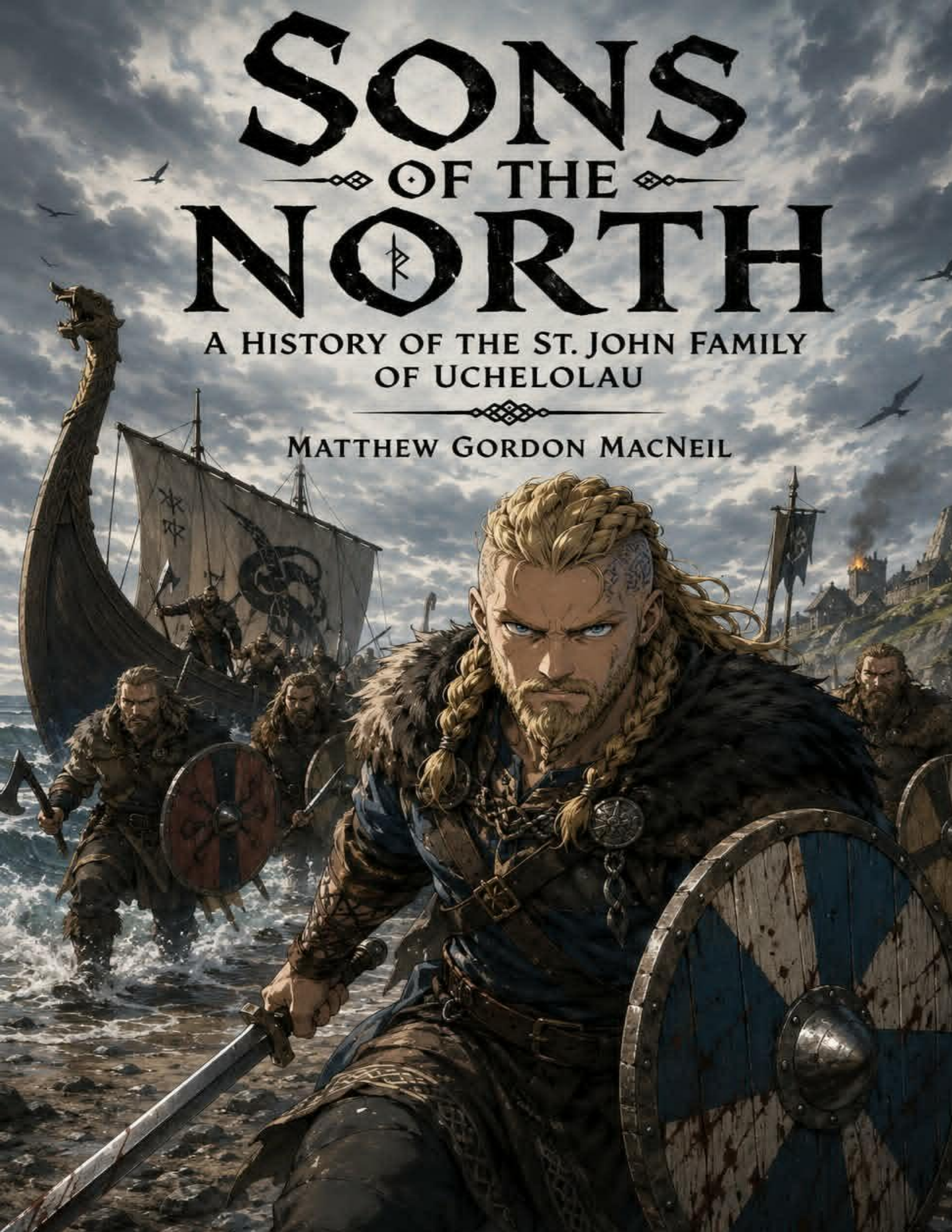

Sons of the North: A History of the St. John Family of Uchelolau

By Matthew Gordon MacNeil

Fridleif Skjoldsson

The St. John family did not originate in Wales but across the North sea in the Kingdom of Denmark close to two thousand years ago.

The first of their line known to history was Fridleif, son of a nobleman named Skjold who claimed descent from Odin, Chief God of the Germanic Pantheon.

Fridleif was born roughly around 259 AD in Lete, Zealand, Denmark. His early life is obscure but during his years as a young man he earned the nickname of 'The Swift' due to his speed in battle.

With an unnamed wife Fridleif fathered a son, Frodi, in 280.

When King Dan III of Denmark died in 295 AD without children Fridleif, as one of the most skilled warriors in the Danish Court, was elected King in his place. In the first years of his reign Fridleif made an alliance with Huyrwil, Lord of Oland, a Lordship in what is today Holland, and together the two men attacked Norway in 297.

The Norse who responded to the invasion were led by a Shield Maiden named Rusla who was known throughout Scandinavia for her skill in warfare. Fridleif and Huyrwil fought tooth and nail against the woman, with Fridleif killing Rusla in battle himself not long after their intitial confrontation.

However, for reasons unknown, Lord Huyrwil soon regretted his decision to ally with Fridleif and secretly sent peace treaties to the sons of Rusla and their respective fathers, forging alliances with them and turning on the Danes, invading Zealand.

Fridleif, taken aback by this sudden betrayel, wasted little time in marshalling his warriors and meeting Huyrwil in battle,

cornering him in a harbour afterward known as Huyrwil's harbour.

The resulting battle was one of utter bloodshed and death, with neither side prevailing. The Olanders gave as good as they got to the Danes, their blood flowing into the cold water.

The two sides broke off at nightfall, but during the wee hours of morning two of Rusla's sons, Broddr and Blid, used the darkness to flee with their men, abandoning Huyrwil and their other brothers.

When morning came Fridleif, sickened at so much life lost, left his camp alone, challenging Huyrwil and the three remaining sons of Rusla, Gunholm, Buggi, and Fanningr, to single combat.

The four men accepted, no doubt thinking their numbers would see Fridleif dead, but they failed. Fridleif killed Huyrwil first, followed by Buggi and Fanningr, leaving Gunholm for last, his great speed being the reason he prevailed, cutting them all down within minutes of the fight beginning.

This ended the war and Fridleif was able to return home safely with his men. A year later he raided Ireland, lying siege to a town where Dublin now stands, taking it after much struggle and then raiding the British coast where he lost many men.

Fridleif died peacefully in 320 AD.

Frodi Fridleifsson

Known as Frodi III, Frodi Fridleifsson took the throne upon his father's death. His first action as King was to try to woe Hanunda, a daughter of a Xiongnu Chieftain.

She wasn't interested but Frodi used a sorceress to change her mind and the two married.

Hanunda gave Frodi two sons:

Fridleif, born 321.

Halfdan, born 322.

Shortly after the birth of Halfdan Hanunda started an affair with a warrior named Grep, the nephew of the very same sorceress who bewitched her.

Another warrior named Eric discovered the affair and told his King who quickly divorced Hanunda and remarried to a sister of Eric to reward him for his loyalty.

Hanunda's father, however, did not take too kindly to this and led an attack on Denmark with his Chanyu's permission. It was a minor event in Xiongnu history, barely worth remembering,

but to the Danes it was an invasion.

The war lasted seven days in all, Denmark's coast filled with corpses for miles, so Saxo Grammaticus recorded in his History of the Danes, but in the end Frodi and his people won, forcing the Xiongnu back.

Unfortunately for Frodi he did not live long after his victory, being assassinated by the sorceress who helped him originally woo Hanunda.

Fridleif Frodisson and Hilde Akisdottir

Still a child at the time of his father's demise, the nobles decided to hand the Danish Crown to a Skald, Hiam, whom they trusted, instead of giving it to the eldest son of their former King.

Hiam raised Fridleif and Halfdan as his own sons and treated them well, the two brothers growing up to be warriors like their father and grandfather.

In his early twenties Fridleif went to the aid of his kinsman, Halfdan Ericsson, who lived in Sweden and was being beset by twelve Norwegian brothers and their band of warriors.

Fridleif killed eleven of the twelve himself in various battles and allowed the final brother to live if he swore a life oath to him, which the man did. Fridleif returned to Denmark with his Housecarl in toe.

Believing his time had come to succeed to his rightful place as King Frodisson asked Hiam to relinquish the throne but the Skald, enjoying his power, refused, and civil war resulted.

The two men battled each other for a year until 346 AD when Hiam, seeking to assassinate Fridleif, disguised himself as a peasant and infiltrated his headquarters but was soon found out.

Fridleif gave Hiam a chance at killing him anyway, not fearing death. He challenged the Skald to a Holmgang and the two fought to the death, with Hiam losing his life and Fridleif assuming the Kingship of all Denmark.

Soon after becoming King he married Hilde, daughter of Aki, a Norwegian nobleman, and together they had five children:

Helga, born 347.

Olaf, born 348.

Frodi, born 349.

Havar, born 352.

Aki, born 354.

Fridleif reigned over Denmark peacefully until his death in 400. Hilde passed away in 430.

Frodi Fridleisson

Frodi, as a younger son, struck out on his own as a man, becoming a raider. He attacked Sweden numerous times, abducting a daughter of the Swedish King, Jorundr I, in one such raid and taking her back to Denmark where he forcibly married her.

By Jorundrsdottir, Frodi fathered three sons:

Ingjald, born 400.

Halfdan, born 403.

Frodi, born 406.

Frodi lived to a ripe old age, dying in 448 just shy of his one hundredth birthday.

Halfdan Frodisson and Sigrid Aunsdottir

Not much is known of the life of Halfdan Frodisson. He married Sigrid Aunsdottir, his cousin as she was the daughter of his maternal uncle Aun, and his wife Hervor Helgesdottir.

The couple had six children:

Signe, born 423.

Helgi, born 425.

Hrothgar, born 426.

Rorik, born 430.

An unnamed daughter who died as a child.

Elan, born 434.

Halfdan lived a long life, dying in 500. Sigrid lived to one hundred, dying in 505.

Hrothgar Halfdansson and Ognia Verch Gwrwst

Hrothgar lived the life of a raider, joining the numerous raiding parties into the British Isles in 450s when Danes, Saxons, Jutes, and other Germanic peoples pillaged and

ravaged Britain as it's many Kings fought amongst themselves.

One such King, Gwrwst Lledlwm, ruler of the Kingdom of Rheged in what is today Northern England, became an ally of Hrothgar in 456 when he married his daughter Ognia in exchange for protection against Germanic raiders.

By Ognia Hrothgar had six children:

Hilde, born 457.

Agnar and Valdar, born 458.

Freawaru, born 462.

Roric, born 466.

Hrothmund, born 467.

Hrothgar spent the rest of his life in Britain, first serving Gwrwst Lledlwm and later, when Constantine Pendragon I came to Britain in the 460s, serving the House of Pendragon, dying in 495.

Hilde Halfdansdottir and Halfdan Fridleifsson

Hilde, like the rest of her siblings, grew up in Britain under the

rule of Constantine Pendragon enjoying the peace his reign brought the once fractured Island. In 485 her brothers Agnar and Valdar decided to return to Scandinavia, invading and conquering the Island of Scania in Denmark for their own.

Hilde went to live with them soon thereafter, the reasons unknown. It was while living in Scania she met Halfdan Frideifsson, the current King of Denmark who, understandably, was trying to bring the newly created Kingdom back under his rule.

Agnar and Valdar, knowing they couldn't hope to last long against Halfdan's forces, came to an agreement. If the Danish King would allow them to reign over a semi independent Kingdom for the rest of their natural lives they promised at their deaths it would revert back to him, and they suggested he marry Hilde.

I say suggested as in Pagan Danish society women had the right to decline any marriage proposal they didn't like. Luckily for her brothers Hilde found Halfdan attractive enough to consider. The two married in short order.

They had four children:

Rolf, born 486.

Heorogar, born 488.

Hrothgar, born 490.

Sigyna, born 492.

Hilde and Halfdan enjoyed a peaceful, happy marriage until his death in 500 AD, after which their son Rolf succeeded to the Danish throne.

Hilde lived long enough to see the rise of the Arthurian Empire and Denmark's absorption into it peacefully. The Queen Mother died in 547.

Rolf Halfdansson and Hildis of the Vandals

A young man when he rose to the throne Rolf thought it best if he married quickly to secure the succession. To this end he decided to try his luck with a half Swedish, half Saxon woman named Olof who reigned as Queen of the Saxons in Germany.

A warrior who often wore chainmail armour and helmet, Olof was a proud and valiant fighter, but she was also known to be cruel. Rolf believed he could change her. Knowing she was a veteran of many battles Rolf decided that only through war could he hope to attain her, so he gathered together a warband and crossed into Germany.

Instead, as she was caught off guard, Queen Olof offered to

host Rolf and his men, holding a feast in their honour. No doubt the young King knew this was just buying time at best but he accepted.

Rolf took a seat beside the Queen and they drank together throughout the evening, Olof showing no signs of distress or anger towards him. She supplied the young King with as much mead as he could handle, getting him smashed.

Once Rolf and his most of his men passed out Olof, admiring his courage so choosing to spare his life, shaved his head and covered him in honey before having her men carry him back to his ship.

When he awoke in the morning he quickly realized what Olof had done to him but, seeing as he and his men were hungover, Rolf retreated back to Denmark, leaving the Saxons to themselves.

But he wasn't done. News spread fast in the Germanic world and Rolf knew he needed to act or be seen as a fool forever. In 503 he raised another army, marching into Saxony with fire and sword.

Olof met the Danes but this time she stood no chance, her forces destroyed and she forced to submit. Rolf, uninterested in marriage now, wanted to humiliate Olof. He raped her in her Great Hall making all her servants and warriors listen.

Once he finished he returned to Denmark having exacted tribute from the Saxons. A year later Olof gave birth to Rolf's first child, a baby girl. The Queen had little interest in her daughter, this is highlighted by knowing she named her Yrsa after one of her hunting hounds.

In time Rolf learned of his daughter's birth and the neglectful condition she was in. He sent his younger brother Heorogar to Germany to take the girl into his custody. Olof did not resist and Yrsa was taken back to the Danish Court where she was raised with the love and devotion she deserved by her father and paternal relatives.

After this Rolf reigned in Denmark without incident. In the 520s he learned of Norway's conquest by the forces of Arthur Pendragon, the grandson of his own maternal grandfather's former Lord. Deciding it was best to submit before his own Kingdom was invaded by the ever expanding Empire, Rolf traveled to Britain and formally submitted Denmark to Arthur who accepted his vassalage and allowed him to keep his Crown.

From then on Rolf served the Pendragon Dynasty faithfully, becoming known as a fierce warrior in their army. He fought in Arthur's Roman campaign in the 540s and was there in Rome when Arthur was Crowned Emperor of the Roman Empire.

Prior to this campaign, in 534, Rolf married Hildis, Princess of the Vandals, a Germanic tribe who had migrated to North Africa prior to her birth. Her father was Hilderic, King of the Vandals and Governor of North Africa.

The couple had three children:

Harald, born 535.

Gudrad, born 536.

Frodi, born 538.

Rolf reigned until 570 when he was challenged to a Holmgang by a resentful warrior named Skuldi. This man was a berserker and midway through the battle he transformed into a bear, killing Rolf easily.

Harald Rolfsson and Hervor Heidraksdottir

Harald, known in Scandinavian traditions as Harald the Old due to his long life, reigned as Denmark's King upon his father's death.

He married before coming to the throne, wedding Hervor Heidraksdottir in 568. Hervor, named after her paternal

grandmother, was daughter of Heidrak, King of Norway.

Together the couple had three sons:

Halfdan, born 570.

Gudrod, born 572.

Frodi, born 573.

Harald was known for his raids into Eastern Europe, the Balkans and what is today Russia specifically. He ravaged these lands, slaying another Viking leader, Sigtrygg, in single combat in 574, marking the high point of his career.

He lived to be one hundred, dying in 635, but had long since abdicated to throne to Halfdan. It is unknown when Hervor passed away.

Halfdan Haraldsson and Moalda Creodasdottir

Halfdan, nicknamed the Vaillant, became King of Denmark in 590. He spent his early reign fighting in raids into areas not under Arthurian control.

He married Moalda, daughter of Creoda, Duke of the Mercians, in 608. Moalda's people, like the Danes, were

Germanic. They hailed from Germany originally and had settled in Britain under Moalda's third great grandfather Icel, with Arthur Pendragon's permission.

The pair had four children:

Ivar, born 613.

Auda, born 614.

Thrond, born 615.

Solvig, born 616.

Halfdan ruled Denmark until 631 when, quite suddenly, he was assassinated by his own brother, Gudrod, who seized the throne and forced his nephews and nieces to flee the Kingdom.

Thrond Halfdansson and Ragnhild Sigurdsdottir

Little is known of Thrond's life. He served his elder brother Ivar as a warrior when he returned to Denmark and killed Asa, wife of Gudrod (who had talked him into killing Halfdan, and later killed him herself as she desired more power) in 648.

After the restoration of their family to the throne Ivar

rewarded Thrond by making a deal with the Norwegian King to have him made the Jarl of Trondheim. In Trondheim Thrond married Ragnhild Sigurdsdottir, daughter of Sigurd, a noble from the town.

Ragnhild gave him two children:

Asa, born 652.

Eystein, born 655.

Thrond died in 667. It is unknown when Ragnhild died.

Eystein Throndsson

Eystein lived through the fall of the Arthurian Empire and held on to his Jarldom throughout the chaotic Civil Wars that erupted across the realm and saw Norway fall apart into various Kingdoms and Jarldoms.

By an unnamed concubine he fathered three children:

Hogni, born 700.

Frodi, born 702.

Asa, born 704.

Eystein died in 710.

Asa Eysteinsdottir and Halfdan Olafsson

In her late teens Asa wed Halfdan Olafsson, a Swedish Prince who carved out land for himself in Norway, taking control of the Kingdom of Vestfold.

Together they had two sons:

Eystein, born 720.

Gudrid, born 722.

Through Halfdan's conquests Asa became Queen over much of Norway. By 730 the couple ruled, in addition to Vestfold, Hedemark, Toten, Hadeland, and Romerike, all won by Halfdan's sword.

But as great a warrior and General as he was Halfdan never succeeded in reuniting Norway under one King. He died in 750 in his sleep.

Asa herself died in 759.

Gudrid Halfdansson

Little can be said of Gudrid. He rose to the Kingship of Vestfold upon his father's death while his elder brother Eystein took control of Romerike and the other territories conquered by Halfdan.

The two siblings got along well and there was never any conflict between them, Gudrid content with his portion of the inheritance.

In 770 he fathered a son, Olaf, with a concubine.

Gudrid died in 810.

Olaf Gudridsson

Beyond the fact Olaf fathered a son, Rognvald, in 790, and ascended to the throne of Vestfold on his father's death in 810, nothing can be said of him.

Olaf Gudridsson died in 840, having given up the throne to his cousin, Halfdan the Black, in 820 due to the better blood claim

and living out the rest of his life as a Chieftain.

Rognvald Olafsson and Thora Sigurdsdottir

Rognvald's life, like those of his father and grandfather, is poorly documented, but it can be said he was a well respected Chieftain in Norway. He married Thora Sigurdsdottir, daughter of a certain Sigurd whose background is unknown.

By Thora, Rognvald had one child, a daughter named Ascrieda, in 812.

Rognvald died in 847.

Ascrieda Rognvaldsdottir and Eystein Ivarsson

As a young woman Ascrieda married Eystein Ivarsson, the Jarl of Oppeland. Together the couple had two sons:

Rognvald, born 830.

Sigurd, born 832.

Ascrieda died in 890, outliving Eystein, who died in 870, by twenty years.

Rognavld Eysteinsson

Rognvald grew up in relative obscurity as his family was not very powerful compared to other Norwegian Chieftains and Kings. His father, content with what he owned, did not seek to expand their territories or get into wars with other leaders.

This all changed when Harald Halfdansson, known to history as Harald Fairhair, son and heir of Halfdan the Black, began his campaign to reunite Norway under one single man in the early 870s.

By this time Rognvald was a warrior and father, having fathered eight children, the first four by a slave woman and the last five by his lawful wife Ragnhild Hrolfsdottir:

Ivar, born 850.

Hallad, born 851.

Hrollaug, born 855.

Einar, born 859.

Hrolf, born 860.

Tore, born 862.

Guthrum, born 865.

Instead of challenging Harald in battle Rognvald, realizing he couldn't win, swore loyalty to him in 873 and became one of his most devoted followers.

In exchange for his oath of loyalty Harald granted Rognvald the title of Jarl of More. In the years to come Eysteinsson proved his worth on the battlefield, Harald naming him a General.

At the Battle of Hafrsfjord in 874 Harald and Rognvald led their forces against the final holdouts in Harald's unification attempts, Eric of Hordaland and Kjotve the Rich.

The Hordaland King died in the fighting while Kjotve, fearing for his life, fled the battlefield never to be heard of again.

Once Norway was reunited and Harald took his place as King Rognvald briefly returned to More, no doubt hoping to settle down for awhile. However it wasn't long before his Lord called upon him again as many Norse Chieftains and Jarls, rejecting his authority, left Norway and headed into the Scottish Isles, including Shetland and Orkney, where they led raids on Norwegian soil.

Together Harald Rognvald and his three eldest sons sailed West with a fleet of Dragon ships in the summer of 876, killing and burning their way across the Scottish Isles. Sometime during this war Ivar Rognvaldsson died, killed in battle.

In compensation for his son's loss Harald granted Rognvald the Jarldom of Orkney and Shetland, but seeing it would be too difficult to rule all the way in Norway Rognvald gave it to his younger brother Sigurd once back home who swiftly left to claim his new lands.

Rognvald lived until 890 when Halfdan Long Leg, one of Harald Fairhair's many sons, and his friend Guthrum Gleam, surrounded the Jarl's Great Hall one winter night with their men. Their goal was to eliminate Rognvald and his sons so they could claim their lands for their own.

Little did they know none of Rognvald's sons were inside at the time, only the Jarl and sixty of his warriors. Locking the doors with wooden beams Halfdan and Guthrum set it a light, Rognvald and all of his men perishing in the flames.

Hrollaug Rognvaldsson

Like several of his brothers Hrollaug's life is not well documented. In 885 he left Norway with his younger brother Hrolf, known as Hrolf the Walker due to his great size and that no horse could carry him, with two other Norse Chieftains named Sigfried and Sinric and thousands of men.

They sailed to the Kingdom of Francia, modern France, sailing up the Seine river with three hundred ships intending to besiege Paris. After several battles along the riverway the Norsemen eventually reached the legendary city.

Their opponent was Odo, Count of Paris, a man who would in a few years time become King of West Francia, and who was not about to let his city fall to 'savage heathens'. He fortified the city and the bridge connecting it to the mainland (it sat on an Island at this time), but he only had two hundred men at arms, hardly an army.

Gozlin, Bishop of Paris, also took an active role in defense, becoming one in the long line of clergy who took up the sword as well as the Cross.

The Norse finally arrived at Paris on November 25th, 885. At first the leaders asked for tribute, willing to sail home if Odo gave them silver. The Count staunchly refused knowing that if he did more Vikings would come believing he was weak.

Thus the siege began and on the 26th the Norsemen attacked

the northwest tower. The attack was repulsed but not without heavy casualities on the Frankish side.

The following day the Vikings tried using a battering ram to bust down the main city gate but this proved ineffective, and their fire attack they used later in the day also failed. While this latter attack was happening Gozlin stepped out onto the battlefield planting a Cross on the ground and engaging the Norsemen with his axe.

For two grueling months the Vikings besieged Paris. Hrollaug and Hrolf sometime in February left the main army and led raiding parties to attack Le Mans, Chartres, Eveux, and up the Loire river.

In April Sigfried, tired of this futile struggle, accepted sixty pounds of silver and left while Hrollaug, Hrolf, and Sinric remained leading their men. They fought on until the summer but finally came to realize Paris would not fall.

Hrollaug decided to head to Iceland after the Norse army broke up, where he settled in Breidabolstadur, Eyjafjordur, becoming a farmer.

In 886 he married, his wife's name is unknown. Together they had one son, Jon, born in 887.

Hrollaug would eventually be killed sometime in the early 900s while raiding Francia, though the exact date or location is

unknown.

Jon Hrollaugsson and Groa Thordarsdottir

Jon lived all his life in Iceland, marying Groa Thordarsdottir, daughter of Thordur Halvardsson, a Norwegian settler, in 910. He fathered a son and a daughter with her, Askytel, in 911, and Thordis, in 913.

It is unknown when either Jon or Groa died.

Askytel Jonsson and Gerlotta de Blois

Askytel, not content with the life of a farmer in Iceland, left the country as a young man heading to Francia. His great uncle, Hrolf, now known as Rollo to the Franks, had been invested as Count of Rouen the year of his birth by the Frankish King Charles the Simple, and he hoped the elderly man would be generous to him, and he was.

With Hrolf's help Askytel, coming to be known as Ansfrid the

Dane to the Frankish nobles he met, became the Count of Hiesmer soon after arriving in 929. A year later Hrolf died and his son William became the second Count.

The two cousins got along well. Askytel married Gerlotta of Blois, daughter of Count Theobald of Blois, in 934, having one son, Askytel, with her in 935.

Askytel the Elder passed away in 955. Gerlotta predeceased him by five years.

Askytel Askytelsson and Helloe of Beulac

Askytel II married Helloe of Beulac, daughter of Count Godfrey of Beulac, in 955, and together with her had one son, Ansfrid, in 956.

Askytel Askytelsson died in 963. It is unknown when Helloe passed away.

Ansfrid of Hiesmer and Thyra Bjornsdottir

Ansfrid, still a child when he became Count of Hisemer, had his mother rule in his place until he came of age.

In 998 Ansfrid married Thyra Bjornsdottir, a Danish woman whose family immigrated to Normandy, as Hrolf's lands became known meaning literally land of the Northmen, and by her he fathered two children. A son, Thorstein, in 1000, and a daughter, Beatrice, in 1002.

Ansfrid reigned as Count of Hisemer until his death in 1035. Thyra passed away at an unknown date.

Thorstein of Hiesmer and Judith de Montanolier

Having kept close ties with the Counts of Rouen, now the Dukes of Normandy, over the generations Thorstein came to serve his cousin Robert, the future Duke of Normandy in 1019.

Soon after Thorstein married Judith de Montanolier, daughter of a minor nobleman named William de Montanoiler, and by her became the father of six children:

Raoul, born 1020.

Humphrey, born 1025.

Richard, born 1030.

Hugh, born 1031.

The two were extremely close and Thorstein was one of the most trusted officials in Robert's realm. In 1034 Thorstein accompanied Robert to Palestine, visiting Jerusalem with him. On the return trip, however, Robert fell ill and died in the city of Nicaea on July 2nd, 1035.

Upon his deathbed the Duke tasked Thorstein with taking holy relics the Patriarch of Jerusalem had given him back to France, which the Count did.

Unfortunately, while fiercely loyal to Robert, Thorstein rebelled against his son and successor, William, in 1041. This rebellion was put down and Thorstein lost his noble titles, Hisemer being given to William's mother Herleva instead.

But he did keep his life, living out the rest of his days in solitude, dying in 1050.

Raoul de Saint Jean

Disinherited as his father was Raoul had to earn his way back

up through the ranks of the nobility. However how exactly he did this has been lost to time, but by 1045 he was Lord of the town of Saint Jean in Normandy from which he took his surname.

It is unknown whom Raoul married but he fathered four sons:

William, born 1035.

John, born 1043.

Thomas, born 1047.

Raoul, born 1048.

While a minor Lord Raoul was able to bring his family a steady income and protection, something his father lost.

It is unknown when Raoul died precisely but it was sometime in the 1070s.

William Saint Jean

Little is known of William's life. He was a Knight in the service of Duke William of Normandy and in 1050 he fathered a son, Roger, with an unnamed woman.

A part of the Duke's invasion of England in 1066 William Saint Jean fought at the Battle of Hastings on October 14th as a member of the Duke's cavalry. Saint Jean lost his life sometime during the fighting.

Roger Saint Jean and Emma de Lacy

Duke William, to honour Saint Jean's sacrifice, helped bring over his wife and child to live in England, given them land in Devon.

Roger lived out his entire life in England being among the first of the Anglo-Norman aristocracy. Sometime in 1075 Roger married Emma de Lacy who, like him, was born in Normandy, being the daughter of Knight Hugh de Lacy and Emma de Blois.

Together they had one son, Ralph, in 1068.

Roger, while not a major player in the political scene in England, did manage to increase his family's holdings. By 1086 he acquired land in Devonshire, Somerset, Lincolnshire, Yorkshire, Gloucestershire and Northampshire.

Roger died sometime in 1087, leaving all of his wealth to Ralph and Emma.

Ralph Saint Jean and Matilda Surdeval

In 1088 Ralph first came into public office when he was appointed Sheriff of Yorkshire. He made a name for himself for being ruthless in following the King's instructions when a few months after his appointment he confiscated the lands belonging to William of St. Calais, Bishop of Durham who opposed King William II.

Not long after this he married Matilda Surdeval, daughter of Richard Surdeval, a Knight whose background is unknown.

Together they had six sons:

William, born 1090.

Jordan, born 1092.

Elias, born 1093.

Alan, born 1094.

John, born 1095.

Alexander, born 1098.

Ralph Saint Jean passed away in 1123. It is unclear when

Matilda died.

John St. John and Hawisia Plugenet

The first to use the anglicized version of their surname John St. John lived a quiet life on his family's vast estates, primarily in Devonshire.

He married Hawisia Plugenet roughly around 1111 when he was sixteen and she eleven, not an uncommon situation at the time. Hawisia was the daughter of Hugh Plugenet of Headington, Oxfordshire. Like the St. Johns the Plugenets were of Anglo-Norman extraction.

Together John and Hawisia had five children:

Thomas, born 1121.

William, born 1125.

Roger, born 1126.

John, born 1130.

Avaris, born 1135.

John St. John died in 1145. Hawisia outlived him by many

years, dying in 1189.

Thomas St. John and Matilda (surname unknown)

Thomas St. John married Matilda sometime prior to 1165 when their first son Roger was born. The two would have two more sons, Robert in 1172 and Peter in 1174.

Thomas died in 1176, while Matilda's death date is unknown.

Roger St. John and Cecily de Lucy

Roger married Cecily de Lucy, daughter of Reynold de Lucy and Amabel FitzWilliam in 1195 in Cumberland. Cecily, as granddaughter of Prince William of Scotland, son of Duncan I, through her mother, gave the St. Johns a blood connection to the Scottish Royal House and a much appreciated boost in social circles.

Together they had three sons:

John, born 1196.

Thomas, born 1200.

William, born 1202.

Roger accompanied King Richard the Lionheart in 1189 on the Third Crusade. He fought at the Siege of Acre from August 28th 1189 to July 12th, 1191, winning distinction for himself, becoming a renowned Knight in the English army.

Roger St. John died in 1214. It is unknown when Cecily died.

John St. John II and Emma Harcourt

John St. John II married Emma Harcourt, daughter of Richard Harcourt, a loyal Knight in service to King Henry II, in 1214.

By Emma John had three children:

Cecily, born 1215.

Roger, born 1220.

John, born 1222.

John II fought in the Barons War on the side of the Barons, but other than this we know little of his military career. Emma

served as a Lady in the royal Court and later became the nurse and nanny of Princess Katherine, the daughter of Henry II.

John St. John II died in 1230. Emma died in 1260.

John St. John III and Petronilla de Clare

John St. John III married Petronilla de Clare, daughter of Gilbert de Clare, 5th Earl of Gloucester, and Isabel Marshal, who was the daughter of William Marshal, one of England's greatest Knights and Isabel de Clare, the half Welsh, half Irish Countess of Pembroke, in 1240 in Instow, England.

The couple had six children:

Roger, born 1242.

Hugh, born 1245.

Thomas, born 1247.

William, born 1249.

John, born 1263.

Agnes, born 1270.

John St. John III died in 1303 in Instow and after his death

Petronilla left secular life and became a nun at Canonsleigh Abbey in Devon. She rose to become the Abbess of the Abbey, dying in 1320.

John St. John IV and Isabella Courteney

John St. John served under Edward I in his war to subjugate Scotland in the 1290s. For his service he was made the Baron of Basing in 1299 and a year later he married Isabella Courteney, daughter of Hugh Courteney, Baron of Okehampton, and Eleanor le Depenser, daughter of Hugh le Depenser, Justicar of England, and Alice Basset.

Together the couple had four sons:

Alexander, born 1301.

Henry, born 1302.

Laurence, born 1304.

Edward, born 1306.

John St. John III died sometime in 1326. Isabella passed away in 1330.

Alexander St. John and Elizabeth Pyne

Alexander, while the eldest son, did not inherit the Barony as during his early adulthood he joined the Knights Templar, or what remained of the organization after it's official disbandment in 1312.

Through his Templar connections Alexander was able to obtain land in Instow, Devonshire, where he established himself. Here he married Elizabeth Pyne, whose parentage is unknown, and by her had five children:

John, born 1320.

Oliver and Alexandra, born 1322.

Theobold, born 1330.

Henry, born 1332.

While it is unclear what exactly Alexander did for the Templars during his years within the underground organization he no doubt played his part in keeping it alive as there is no hint he ever waivered in their cause.

Alexander St. John died in 1345. Elizabeth died in the same year on August 24th.

Oliver St. John and Elizabeth Luccombe

Oliver St. John, like his father was a Templar, and the first of his family to leave English soil permanently, heading into Wales and settling in the town of Highlight, known in Welsh as Uchel-olau, becoming it's Lord.

He married Elizabeth Luccombe, a Welsh woman of English descent, in 1339 and had a son, John, in 1340, with her.

In 1370 Oliver fought in France during the Hundred Years War, serving under his cousin Thomas le Depenser.

Oliver died in August of 1373 while visiting family in Devonshire. It is unknown when Elizabeth passed away.

John St. John V and Elizabeth de la Bere

John married Elizabeth de la Bere, a Welshwoman of English, Welsh, and French descent, in 1360.

By Elizabeth he fathered a son, John, in 1362.

John St. John V died in 1372, killed on the battlefield while serving in France.

John St. John VI and Lucy Basset

Upon the death of his grandfather John was, rightfully, the next in line for the Lordship of Highlight, but his great uncle Henry somehow convinced the King John didn't exist and that his father died without issue, thereupon securing the Lordship for himself.

Elizabeth did not allow this to go uncontested however, and in 1380 she appealed to King Richard II directly on her son's behalf. She declared Henry a liar and brought witnesses to testify before the Royal Court.

The King tasked two of his Courtiers to investigate the matter and, when it came back Henry did in fact lie, Richard gave the estates into the temporary guardianship of Thomas Mowbray, Earl of Nottingham.

Eventually John St. John VI did receive his inheritance and later went on to become the Sheriff of Glamorganshire. He

married Lucy Basset, a noblewoman of Highlight of mixed Anglo-Welsh and native Welsh descent, in 1395 and in 1396 she gave birth to their only child, a son named Alexander.

John St. John VI died in 1428. Lucy's date of death is unknown.

Alexander St. John II and Anne Craddock

Alexander married Anne Craddock, daughter of Sir Richard Craddock of Glamorgan whose family were of native Welsh origin, in 1427.

The couple had two sons together, John in 1428 and William in 1430.

Alexander inherited the Highlight Lordship upon his father's death and held it until his own death in 1480. Anne passed away at an unknown date.

William St. John and Florene Verch Gwilym

William spent his early life preparing to serve his elder brother John as a Knight in his household.

In 1457 he married Florene Verch Gwyilm, daughter of a native Welshman from Highlight named Gwyilm, who was a well off commoner.

They had three children:

Eva, born 1460.

Oliver, born 1465.

Margaret, born 1466.

Tragedy struck in 1473 when William's elder brother died suddenly, leaving him as the sole heir to their father. He took on the responsibility, becoming Highlight's Lord on his father's passing.

William held the Lordship for many years until his own death in 1538. It is unknown when Florene died.

Oliver St. John II and Janet Raglan

Oliver St. John married Janet Raglan, daughter of Robert Raglan and Joan Clerke of Carmanthanshire, Wales, in 1489.

Together they had six children:

An unnamed child, born 1490, died at birth.

Florene, born 1495.

Catherine, born 1502.

Joan, born 1505.

William, born 1506.

Oliver's tenure as Lord of Highlight was uneventful as he did not hold it for very long, dying six years after his father in 1544. Janet's death date is unknown.

William St. John II and Jane Matthews

William married Jane Matthews, daughter of Robert Matthews and Alice Verch Thomas of Pentych, Wales, in 1521 and together they had five children:

Catherine, born 1525.

Margaret, born 1530.

Joan, born 1535, died as a baby.

Joan, born 1540.

Christopher, born 1545.

Morrice, born 1548.

William St. John died on December 23rd, 1563. Jane died many years later in 1567.

Christopher St. John and Elizabeth Bawdrip

Prior to his father's death Christopher married Elizabeth Bawdrip, daughter of Sir William Bawdrip and his wife Joan of Penmac, Wales on September 24th, 1560. They had seven children together:

William, born 1561.

Nicholas and Anthony, born 1563.

Thomas, born 1564.

Alexander, born 1566.

Mary, born 1568.

Oliver, born 1570.

Despite being married and a father at the time of his own father's death Christopher and his younger brother Morrice were placed into the care of William Herbert, Earl of Pembroke, a friend of their father's and cousin.

By his twentieth year Christopher received the Lordship of Highlight and was able to start up his own household. But, unfortunately for the Lordship he was not the best man for the job.

Christopher collected monies from his tenants which he was supposed to put towards the upkeep of the town and it's Abby, one which his own ancestors helped build and made flourish, but instead he spent the bulk of it on himself and his family, the town slowly detoriating as a result.

Things became so bad that, near the end of his life, Christopher lost the Lordship his family had held since the 1340s. He died penniless on April 22nd, 1616. Elizabeth passed away a year later.

William St. John III and Margaret de la Roche

William took to the seas as a young lad along with his

brothers Nicholas, Thomas, and Alexander.

In 1576, while serving the English Crown as a soldier in Ireland William married Margaret de la Roche, a local woman from a prominent family being the daughter of David de la Roche and Ellen Butler, both belonging to old, well connected Anglo-Irish families.

By Margaret William had five children:

Elizabeth, born 1579.

Margaret, born 1580.

Matthew, born 1581.

Johanna, born 1587.

Robert, born 1592.

William spent his time in Ireland fighting Irish rebels and sailing the Irish sea capturing and slaying pirates, being Knighted for his service in 1607 by Governor Arthur Chichester in Dublin.

In 1609 William, using his ship The Advantage captured a pirate Captain named Harris on July 3rd and brought him to Dublin. Later he also fought pirates across the Islands of Scotland. In the same year he also made a trip to Jamestown, Virginia, where he signed the Second Chater of Jamestown and sat on the King's Council for the colony.

However it wasn't long before William himself was wanted on charges of piracy. In 1610 William and another Welshman, John Hopkins, were sought after following their theft of a fly boat. They evaded capture for another year, joining with Henry Mervyn, yet another Welshman, and continued to plunder until they were finally caught in 1611 and hauled before the Courts in England.

William, whether by sweet talking his way out or due to family connections, was able to escape the gallows and even rise through the ranks of society more. In 1611 he was appointed the Sheriff of Tipperary County, Ireland, serving until 1618.

After his tenure as Sheriff was over William set off for the Gold Coast of Africa where, as a member of the Guinea and Binney company, he served as Governor of the colony they established there.

It was under William's authority that the first gold mine was created and the first Black Africans were sold into slavery in Jamestown.

In his elderly years William retired to Highlight, owning a home in the town even if not the Lordship. He died on January 13th, 1638 while visiting London. Margaret had died many years before in 1603.

Matthew St. John and Sarah (surname unknown)

Matthew St. John, for all of his early life, grew up in London while his father served abroad. He married a woman named Sarah in 1627 and together had seven children:

William, born 23rd of April, 1629.

Elizabeth, born 5th of November 1630.

Sarah, born 1632.

Matthew, born December 12th, 1635.

Joyce, born 1636.

Walter, born 1638.

Tobias, born 1643.

By the time of his last child's birth Matthew St. John had moved his family to New England, first to the Massachuetts Bay Colony and later to Norwalk, Connecticut Colony, playing a role in public life as a jury member in both places.

Matthew made his living as a shoemaker and clothmaker, a far cry from the nobility he came from. Why he chose to

practice these trades or how he came to learn them is unknown.

Matthew St. John died in 1668 in Norwalk. It is unknown when Sarah passed away.

Matthew St. John II and Elizabeth (Surname unknown)

Matthew St. John II became a tavern keeper in Norwalk, marrying his wife Elizabeth in 1657 and by her became the father of five children:

Mary, born 1658.

Ebenezer, born 1660.

Matthias, born 1667.

James, born 1669.

Samuel, born 1675.

Matthew St. John II died on December 28th, 1728 at the grand age of one hundred. His wife's death date is unclear.

Samuel St. John and Rebecca Olmstead

Samuel served as a Captain in Norwalk's militia and worked as a farmer. He married Rebecca Olmstead, daughter of John Olmstead and Mary Benedict, both of Norwalk, in 1700.

Together they had eleven children:

Samuel and Abigail, born 1703.

Jane, born 1705.

Rebecca, born 1706.

Peregrina, born 1707.

Joanna, born 1708.

Noah, born 1713.

Daniel, born 1715.

Ebenezer, born 1719.

Sarah, born 1720.

Job, born 1721.

Samuel St. John died in the winter of 1752 while Rebecca would go on to live until 1755. Their daughter Rebecca married Samuel Lobdell and became the grandmother of Daniel Morehouse.